

## **DEM ANNOUNCES EXTENSIVE AREAS OF STATE WATERS CLOSED TO SHELLFISHING**

PROVIDENCE - The Department of Environmental Management announces that due to extreme sewage overflows and flood induced failures at wastewater treatment facilities experienced during the recent heavy rainfall, most bay waters of the state and all south coastal ponds are closed to shellfishing until further notice.

Closure areas include all waters north of a line from Black Point to Beavertail Point to Brenton Point, and all waters north of a line from Sachuest Point to Sakonnet Point; also, all coastal pond waters of Point Judith Pond, Potters Pond, Ninigret Pond, Quonochontaug Pond and Winnapaug Pond are closed to shellfishing.

DEM continues to evaluate the situation and will perform sampling to determine when waters will be safe for shellfishing. Historic data indicates that Conditional Areas A and B will remain closed for at least 10 days. The South Coast shore ponds and areas south of the southern tip of Prudence Island may improve sooner. Extensive sampling is being planned and will be conducted later this week, weather permitting. Results will be available in 24 hours from the time the samples enter the lab. Based upon the results of these bacteria tests and the condition of wastewater treatment facilities and sewer systems, decisions will be made as to whether additional sampling is needed or whether conditions allow for the waters to be re-opened for shellfish harvesting.

DEM maintains a recorded telephone information line, 222-2900, with the most updated information on shellfish closures.